

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (canceled)

21. (New) A communications apparatus comprising:

a communication network configured to handle packet-based traffic;

a voice processor coupled to the communication network;

a control processor configured to assign a queue priority to a communication signal, the communication signal in transit between the communication network and the voice processor, wherein the queue priority determined at least in part according to whether the communication signal is one of a standard call mode and a bypass call mode.

22. (New) The communication apparatus according to claim 21, wherein each of the one or more voice processors is configured to insert a control flag into a signal delivered to the control processor, where the control processor utilizes the control flag to determine whether the call is one of a standard call mode and a bypass call mode.

23. (New) The communication apparatus according to claim 21, wherein standard call mode comprises communication signals that are at least one of decoded and encoded by a transcoder and bypass call mode comprises communication signals that are not encoded and decoded by the transcoder.

24. (New) The communication apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the communication signals that are at least one of decoded and encoded by the transcoder are one of mobile-to-landline and landline-to-mobile calls and the communication signals that do not require encoding and decoding are mobile-to-mobile calls.

25. (New) The communication apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the queue priority comprises a modified FIFO queue wherein communication signals having a control flag indicating a bypass mode call are placed at the bottom of the modified FIFO queue.

26. (New) A method of operating a packet-based network comprising:
- determining if a communication signal is one of a bypass call mode or a standard call mode;
 - assigning a lower queue value to the communication signal when the communication signal is a bypass mode call than when the communication signal is a standard mode call;
 - transmitting the communication signal in a sequence of communication signals according to its queue value.
27. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein the bypass mode call is a mobile-to-mobile call and the standard mode call is one of a mobile-to-landline and landline-to-mobile.
28. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising:
- utilizing a control flag as a part of the communication signal for indicating whether the communication signal is one of a bypass call mode or standard call mode, the control flag updated by a transcoder.
29. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein transmitting the communication signal in the sequence of communication signals according to its queue value further comprises placing a communication signal determined to be a bypass mode call below a communication signal determined to be a standard mode call in a FIFO queue.